

Galloway settles out of court with former clerk Tilton

Written by STEVE PRISAMENT

Wednesday, December 12, 2012 03:37 pm

GALLOWAY – The township has settled a \$3 million lawsuit filed by former Township Clerk Lisa Tilton.

Council approved the agreement 6-0 at its Tuesday, Dec. 11 meeting with one member abstaining.

Terms of the settlement were not released.

Councilman Jim McElwee, the only council member not named in the lawsuit, was the lone abstention.

“I’m happy the township is going to move forward,” Mayor Don Purdy said after the meeting. “We’re leaving the drama behind us. A lot of the parties involved are no longer connected to the township.”

Tilton declined comment “at this time,” Wednesday, saying, “Please direct all requests for comments to my attorney.”

Tilton was attempting to have a July 18 settlement rescinded because, she claimed, it was later violated by the township and various Galloway employees. She sought reinstatement to her township position with benefits, back pay and additional payments.

Tilton claimed that her suspension and the July 18 agreement that included her resignation were the result of a vendetta with former Township Manager Steve Bonanni and former Councilman Dennis Kleiner.

Former Township Solicitor Michael Blee was also named in the suit regarding Tilton’s personal information release through an Open Public Records Act request.

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The township must certify the resolution passed following Tuesday's executive session. Representatives for Tilton, Kleiner, Blee and Bonanni must also sign the agreement.

Purdy said a monetary figure was agreed upon in the settlement, but he couldn't discuss the specifics.

In the lawsuit, Tilton said she had an "exemplary employment" record prior to Bonanni becoming township manager in January 2011.

She would have been up for reappointment and could have received tenure that November.

Tilton called the July 18 special hearing a "sham" to publicly embarrass her and then-Mayor Keith Hartman, who was not named in the lawsuit.

Bonanni retired as township manager Jan. 31, 2012. Kleiner moved out of the township and resigned from council June 25.

Tilton has also filed tort claim notices against Atlantic County, the Atlantic County Board of Elections and Middle Township, where she claims officials discriminated against her during its hiring process for a new deputy clerk.

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